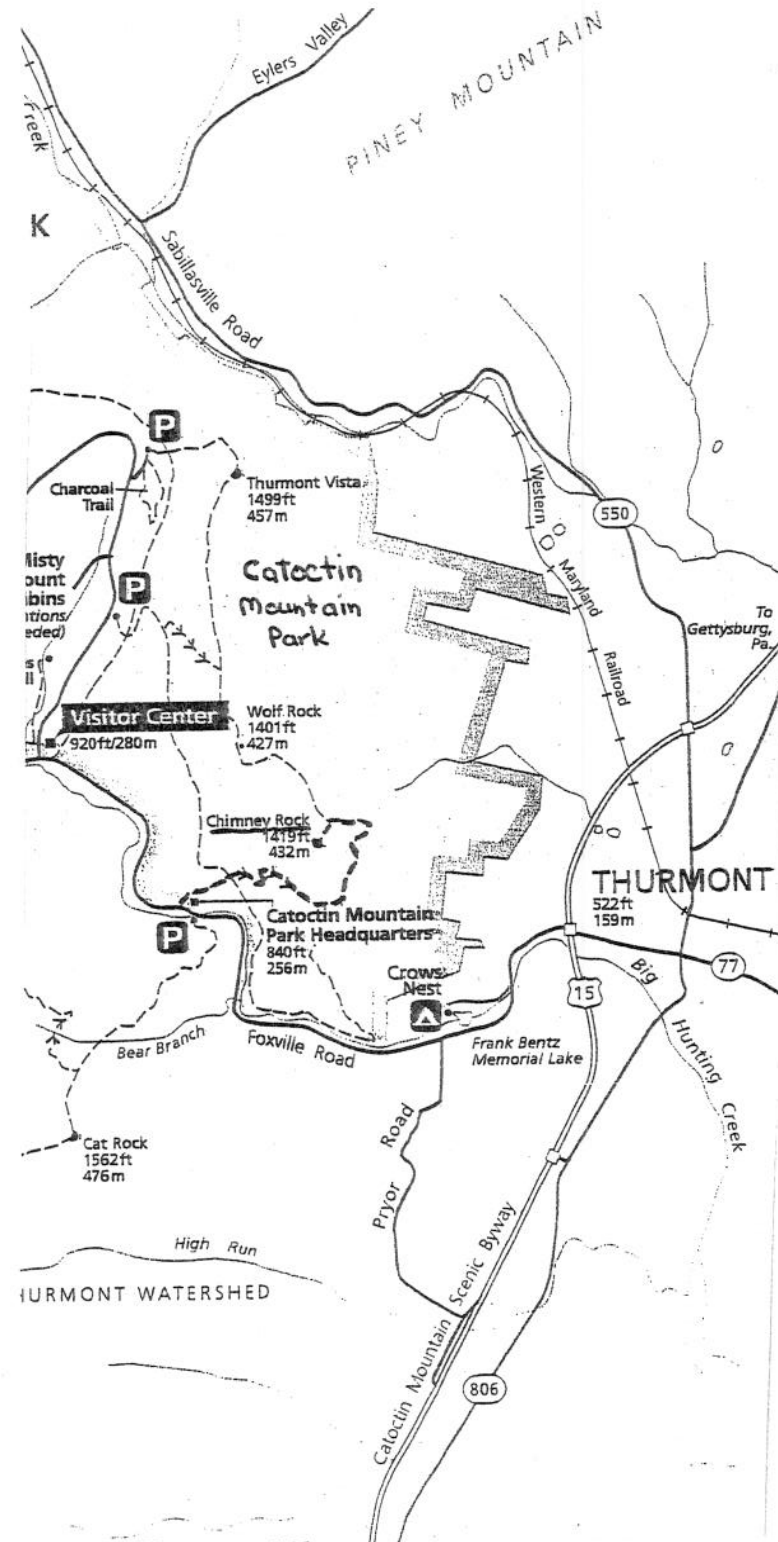


CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN PARK - CHIMNEY ROCK

BY MARYLOU STONE



This is a wonderful hike that climbs up the mountain to Chimney Rock. At the top you get a great view of Route 15 south and the surrounding farms. On a clear day you can see Frederick and Sugar Loaf Mountain.

This trail is 2.2 miles round trip and starts on Route 77 at the Park Headquarters - not the Visitors Center. The trail is rated strenuous, climbing 520 feet in 1.1 miles. It is also very rocky so hiking boots are a good idea.

I did this trail on a warm July morning and spotted several deer. The trail is very steep but it eventually reaches a level stretch. On the way up, the trail crosses a spring where I spotted a Chickadee, Blue Jay, Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, and a Worm Eating Warbler.

The view at the top was great and provides a good rock to sit on and have lunch. But be careful climbing on the rocks as you could seriously injure yourself.

On the way down I noticed what appeared to be several patches of mud on the trunks of most of the trees. A park ranger told me this was caused by the gypsy moth. This is a serious problem as the gypsy moth eats the leaves of the trees and over time can kill the tree.

You can add more miles to your hike by continuing on the trail to Wolf Rock.